

RESPONSE

Juan Martin Diez (1775–1825)

to Major-General Joseph Léopold Sigisbert Hugo (1773–1828)

December 1810

I value as I ought the opinion you have formed of me; I have formed a very bad one of you. Nevertheless, if you sincerely repent your atrocities, and tired of being a slave you wish to recover your liberty in the service of a free nation valiant as she is generous, the Empecinado offers you his protection.

That Massena and his army surrendered on 4 November last would seem to admit of no doubt; but allowing it to be untrue, certain it is that if he has not already perished, he will soon be destroyed; for fortune, his mother, has for a long time turned her back upon him!

There is little doubt that the actual state of things must soon terminate, for it appears that all the nations of Europe are combined against the French. However, without that circumstance Spain has always had and now particularly has more force, energy, and constancy than are required merely to humble the legions of your kings.

Corrupt and venal men alone can find in your Joseph the First King of Madrid! Those qualities which you suppose him to have—if he be so good a man, why does he commit and suffer to be committed such atrocities? A proud and perfidious usurper can never be a good man! The Spaniards who take part with the brother of Napoleon must be very few, but if there were many they must always be the vilest and most detestable; the sound part of the nation, which is the great majority and which constitutes her strength, abhors and detests even the very name of a Frenchman.

I am quite astonished at your holding out and breathing sentiments of humanity! Publish your humanity at Guadalajara, Siguenza, Huete, Cifuentes, Frillo, Douon, Ita, in the towns of the valleys, in short in every village and spot that has had the misfortune to be visited by either you or your soldiers! Will they believe you? And I who have witnessed your deeds, how am I to credit your words?

In vain do you labor if you think to dissuade either me or any of my soldiers from our honorable undertaking, be well assured that so long as one single soldier of mine is alive, the war will be carried on; they have all, in imitation of their chief, sworn eternal war against Napoleon and those vile slaves who follow him. If you please you may tell your king and your brethren in arms that the Empecinado and his troops will die in defense of their country.

They never can unite themselves to men debased, without honor, without faith, and without religion of any kind! Be good enough to cease to write to me.

I am the Empecinado.

-. *The Life and Military Exploits, etc. etc. of Don Juan Martin Diez, The Empecinado...*(1823):83–85.